



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
EDMUND G BROWN JR., Governor

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State Victims Program Leaders Applaud New Law Increasing Benefits to California Victims of Violent Crime

Sacramento, CA – A new law signed today by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. will provide new tools for the California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP) to help more victims of violent crime in California.

The Victim Compensation Program Modernization bill, AB 1140, by Assemblyman Rob Bonta (D-Oakland), modernizes program statutes, improves access to benefits and eliminates some eligibility restrictions for victims.

The new law comes as CalVCP commemorates its 50 years of work as the first and largest victims benefit program in the nation. As it moves forward, the program will now be equipped with many new features in its benefits program to best serve victims' needs.

Some new provisions provide extra compensation to adjust for inflation or "cost of living" – this is the first increase in 13 years – while others address new areas of crime. Still others make it easier for victims – traumatized and often poor and under-educated – to more easily access the complex support network.

"California has always worked to take care of victims of crime and these changes will allow CalVCP to continue that important work," said Marybel Batjer, secretary of the Government Operations Agency and CalVCP board chairperson.

A look at some of the changes in the new modernization bill:

- Allows Compensation for Harassment through Non-Consensual Sharing of Sexual Images: Online communications as a means for criminal harassment is a growing problem, and this provision will now allow financial restitution for this especially noteworthy crime.
- Prohibits Denial of Claims in sexual assault and domestic violence cases solely because

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the victim took too long to file a police report or did not file one. The new law recognizes that victims are traumatized and often fearful to come forward due to possible retaliation, and provides accommodations for these victims. It also allows the Board to consider other evidence – medical and mental health records, sexual assault exams, for example - in making its determination.

- Translate Application Materials into Multiple Languages. To provide clearer communications channels for the state’s victims, this law calls for translation of all filing and instruction materials into 13 of the most common languages spoken in the state.

“Fear of retaliation, depression and shame are just a few of the effects victims endure following a violent crime,” said Julie Nauman, CalVCP executive officer. “This new law will make it easier for those traumatized by crime to receive sensitive and compassionate support in their time of need by removing barriers and recognizing victims’ challenges.

“We cannot take a single approach to helping victims,” Nauman added. “We recognize that the needs of victims are very personal, and require CalVCP to be responsive to the real needs of crime victims.”

In conjunction with passage of this modernization program, CalVCP is also providing statewide training to policy makers, law enforcement officials, criminal justice leaders and victim service providers on increasing access to compensation.

“As CalVCP commemorates 50 years of serving victims, we continue to strive for a forward-thinking and compassionate approach to best meet the needs of all California victims of violent crime,” Nauman said.

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The California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP) provides compensation for victims of violent crime who are injured or threatened with injury. Among the crimes covered are domestic violence, child abuse, sexual and physical assault, homicide, robbery, and vehicular manslaughter.

If a person meets eligibility criteria, CalVCP will compensate many types of services when the costs are not covered by other sources. Eligible services include medical and dental care, mental health services, income loss, funeral expenses, rehabilitation and relocation. Funding for CalVCP comes from restitution fines and orders, penalty assessments levied on persons convicted of crimes and traffic offenses, and matching federal funds.

For more information about victims’ rights and services, visit CalVCP at calvcp.ca.gov.